

Our University

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESIDENT FOR THE UC COMMUNITY



February 2011



On Feb. 22, 2011, President Mark G. Yudof issued a video letter to the UC community. A transcript of his remarks follows:

Thank you for joining me.

I am here to talk to you about our state budget situation, what it suggests for the future of UC, and most definitely, how you can help.

As you know, we are confronting some very serious financial challenges, and some very difficult choices.

Governor Brown has proposed a new budget of cuts of \$500 million for the University of California.

When these cuts are combined with other unfunded obligations, our true budget gap is \$1 billion.

That's an enormous fiscal hole.

We understand the state has a grave financial problem, and that we have a role to play in the solution.

We are doing our part to be good partners, working aggressively to implement efficiencies and identify how the cuts will impact programs and services.

But make no mistake about it, no matter how efficient we are, a funding gap that is this large

is going to significantly impact and change the University of California.

We may be forced to lay off employees, turn away new students, reduce academic programs, suspend building projects, and take other measures.

We cannot save or streamline our way around a problem of this magnitude. We also cannot continue to operate without adequate state support.

We need long-term funding stability, and we need to be pressing that case and we need to press it now.

California is a special place — a land of opportunity, innovation and solutions, where what's possible actually happens.

But California didn't get this way by accident.

It was built from the ground up, over many decades, with a lot of help from the University of California.

So we need to build broad awareness that higher education is critical to California's future, and there needs to be a long-term plan to stabilize UC's funding.

With everyone's help — with your help — we can deliver a strong message to Sacramento and to people throughout the state about the importance of UC to California's future.

Our state leaders need to hear from you: that you believe in education, that you believe in innovation, and job creation because they are all critical to the future of our state and are the best investment our state can be making at this critical time.

We are a big community with the power to influence our future.

Every voice matters and I mean *every* voice matters — *your* voice matters.

Please go to ucforcalifornia.org, sign up and send an email to your legislator today.

And if you are an advocate, thank you, and please be sure your elected representatives are hearing from you.

I will be back in touch with you over the coming months to update you on our budget situation and to report back on our efforts.

Until then, thank you in advance for your partnership, and for standing up for UC and for California.

Read the transcript in Spanish:

<http://www.ucop.edu/newsroom/newswire/img/14/14242151614d640dda53586.pdf>

UC replacing campus payroll systems

By Carolyn McMillan

The University of California has embarked on an ambitious plan to deploy a single payroll system and a single human resources system across all 10 campuses and five medical centers.

The goal: within four years, UC will be able to pay all 180,000 employees from a single university-wide payroll system that meets the core needs of each location while capturing the efficiencies, improved data and cost savings associated with a unified system. In addition, a common human resources information system will provide tools and a repository for all data related to the efficient management of the university's workforce.

The Payroll Personnel System replacement project is one of the highest priorities for UC's Working Smarter initiative, which aims to elevate UC's business practices to the same level of excellence as its teaching and research enterprises.

Through a variety of systemwide, regional and campus-level efficiencies, the Working Smarter initiative expects to improve administrative operations while redirecting \$500 million in annual savings to UC's academic and research mission within the next five years.

"The Payroll Personnel System replacement project is a vital part of Working Smarter," said Peter Taylor, UC's chief financial officer. "Not only is our payroll system 30 years old and in need of modernizing, but there are different variations running at each campus location, making it extremely difficult to synchronize and consolidate payroll and human resource information."

Campus controllers, chief human resource officers and academic personnel directors completed an assessment of the payroll personnel system, or PPS, in 2009 and recommended planning for a replacement. They also began working to standardize related business practices.

Since then, UC's Board of Regents has endorsed the Working Smarter initiative, and President Mark G. Yudof, CFO Taylor and Executive Vice President for Business Operations Nathan Brostrom have put the PPS replacement project on the fast track.

A staff of three is working full time to oversee and manage the PPS replacement project, while teams from across UC tackle specific aspects of the massive, systemwide effort.

"This is very collaborative process, with strong support from senior UC administrators and high levels of participation at every campus and medical center," said PPS Replacement Project Director Anthony Lo. "For such a complex project, the four-year timetable is an ambitious schedule but one that we can achieve with everyone working together."

When all phases of the project are complete, UC will have single, centralized systems for processing payroll, fulfilling campus timekeeping needs and collecting and analyzing human resources information.

Not only will the new systems save UC money — \$30 million or more annually according to initial projections — but they will also improve the way payroll and human resource services are delivered.

"Some of our current systems are so complex that they inhibit business redesign for more effective operations," EVP Brostrom said. "To achieve our vision of excellence in business operations, we need to address the processes and systems used to pay and manage our dynamic workforce."

During the first phase of the PPS replacement project, team members gathered information about current practices, systems and staffing models at each UC location for delivering payroll and human resource services.

The data were then synthesized to develop functional requirements for the new systems. The university has now begun an open, competitive bid process for the appropriate system solutions.

If all goes as planned, the PPS replacement project team will select a vendor and execute an agreement by July 1.

At least as important as the technical solution, however, is the cultural change that is taking place as the campuses come together to reach agreement on streamlined and common processes and a shared interpretation of UC policies.

"The PPS replacement project is much broader than simply replacing the payroll system," Taylor said. "We envision a future in which all 10 campuses deliver the same high-quality, standardized payroll and human resource services, but within a framework that reflects campus operations, culture and needs."

Carolyn McMillan is the managing editor for Internal Communications in the UC Office of the President.

What are you doing for lunch?

UC Davis Professor Carolyn de la Peña sweet-talked UC faculty and staff Ustream viewers earlier this month, presenting an entertaining history of how saccharin, Splenda and other sugar substitutes have transformed our relationship with food.

A professor of American studies and director of the UC Davis Humanities Institute, de la Peña is the author of *Empty Pleasures: The Story of Artificial Sweeteners from Saccharin to Splenda*. Her talk was part of the Research Lunch Series at the UC Office of the President, a monthly lecture given by scholars from across the UC system, sponsored by Communications and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS).

The lectures are streamed live on Ustream for viewing across the UC system. You can view de la Peña's talk here: <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/12574898>.

Upcoming lectures feature speakers from scientists and directors to artists and thinkers, providing a look into what it means to be a "researcher" in a range of disciplines. Speakers are invited to talk about their work, the state of research in their fields, national trends and events and their personal motivations and experiences.

"Our goal is to 'wow' people with the research that's being done on the campuses and to show how UC, through work like this, is affecting people's lives," said ORGS Vice President

Steven Beckwith. "Research is one of the key pillars of what the University of California does, and we do it very well. We should be proud."

Upcoming lecturers include:

- UCLA's Lynn Zucker and Michael Darby on the impact of industry-university collaborations (March 18)
- UCLA's Laurence C. Smith on how global climate change will affect the world by 2050 (April 29)
- UC San Diego's Wayne Cornelius on U.S. immigration control policies and their unintended consequences (May 13)
- UC San Diego's V. "Ram" Ramanathan on his ongoing effort to push both science and society to solve global warming (June 10)

Lectures are from noon to 1 p.m.; watch live via Ustream TV (www.ustream.tv/ucevents).

March 4 is application deadline for Staff Advisor to the Regents

Applications to be the next Staff Advisor-designate to the Regents are due March 4.

The staff advisor program, now in its fifth year, allows for two staff and/or non-Senate academic employees to participate in open sessions of designated committees of the board.

The staff advisors bring the voice and perspective of staff and non-Senate academic employees to board deliberations.

The current staff advisors to the Regents are Juliann Martinez, director of gift management at UC Berkeley, whose two-year term will expire in June, and Penelope "Penny" Herbert, manager in the Department of Clinical Operations, UC Davis Health System, who joined the Board in July 2010.

Application forms and additional information about the staff advisor program are available at the staff advisor web site and through local human resources offices.

Questions about the staff advisor position or the application process should be directed to Jeannene Whalen, UCOP Employee Relations, at 510-987-0853 or via email: Jeannene.Whalen@ucop.edu.

About the staff advisors to the Regents

A continuing goal of the UC Regents is to foster two-way communication between UC staff and the board. In January 2007, the Regents voted unanimously to establish positions for two staff advisors to participate in their deliberative process and to provide a staff perspective on matters coming before the board.

One new staff advisor is selected each year for a two-year term. The staff advisors serve as non-voting advisors to designated Regents' committees, and they attend and participate directly in committee and board meetings throughout their term of service.

More Systemwide News

UC medical schools increase underrepresented minority students:

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/24900>

UC Center Sacramento is rededicated:

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/24925>

California Health Interview Survey releases newest data on health of state residents:

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/chis-2009-released-191987.aspx>

PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Making a Difference, One Stitch at a Time

By Ioana Patringenaru

Quilts are stacked up in piles, two feet high, on top of bookshelves and desks. More are stashed in open-door wooden cabinets, their colorful patterns spilling out of the frames. They come from as far as Hawaii, Alaska and Maine. They're headed for more than 70 research centers throughout the nation, from California, to New York, to Florida, where they will be handed out to patients taking part in the Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study, run in collaboration by UC San Diego and the National Institute on Aging.

Wherever they come from and wherever they're headed, all the quilts first find a temporary home in the office of Jeffree Itrich, a communications specialist for the study who came up with the idea of donating quilts to patients in the study a year ago. The project is meaningful to Itrich in several ways: she is a quilter and lost her mother to severe dementia.

There are more quilts in the office next to Itrich's, which had been vacant for a while. A new staff member is set to move in soon though. "I hope she likes quilts," Itrich quipped. So far, she's collected more than 600 quilts and has shipped about 450.

It all started when she thought that it would be nice to thank the patients who take the time to participate in the study, which sometimes involves sitting in an MRI, receiving infusions and other time-consuming procedures. She thought quilts would be perfect comfort objects for the patients and their families. Another name for them is comforters, after all.

"It's about giving back and trying to do the right thing," Itrich said.

As a quilter, she knew those who shared her hobby were very generous. There are only so many quilts you can make for friends and family, she explained. But she didn't anticipate the deluge of blankets that soon came pouring into her office.

She started out with a small group of only 50 participants. She contacted fellow quilters, blogs and websites. Within three months, she had 75 blankets. Then the AARP got wind of her efforts. The organization decided to feature the donation program in the September issue of its *Bulletin*, which reaches 25 million households.

"Your life will not be your own for a while," the reporter who interviewed Itrich warned.

She was right. The day after the magazine was delivered to AARP members, the phone started ringing off the hook. Luckily, Itrich and fellow staff members had set up a special phone line and a special e-mail address. In all, about 1160 people inquired about the program. She heard from many staff members who told her that patients' responses are very moving.

"The quilts are making a difference," she said.

One study coordinator told her the story of a woman who came with her daughters to one of the research centers to undergo an MRI. The coordinator realized the patient was going to get cold during the procedure. So, she went to get her the quilt she had planned on giving her later. The woman's daughters looked like they were about to cry. They were astounded that a complete stranger would take the time to make a quilt for their mother.

Another study coordinator called to ask if Itrich had any outer space – or music-themed quilts for a patient who was a fan of both. Itrich didn't, but she called a fellow quilter whose specialty is themed quilts. The woman said she'd see what she could do. A little later, Itrich received two music and space quilts. She shipped them to the study coordinator. She then got a call.

"You have no idea how you made this man's day," the coordinator told Itrich.

Meanwhile, Itrich didn't anticipate the emotional response from the quilters who gave their work. Some had lost a parent to Alzheimer's. Others had lost friends. Some feared they were next. All said they felt compelled to do something to thank the patients who are helping finding a cure.

The project has received more than 600 quilts so far.

"Most people have been touched by Alzheimer's but have been able to work through their grief," Itrich said. "It's been a catharsis for them."

La Mesa resident Kimberley Graf lost her paternal grandfather to a form of Alzheimer's. "It's just so pervasive, and there are so many people that suffer from it," she said. "You can't help but want to help." She gave Itrich about a half a dozen quilts. "She's just very sincere and very caring," Graf said.

Many quilters sent notes along with their work, some three to four pages long.

"Thank you for all you are doing to study Alzheimer's," one quilter wrote. "It is a terrible disease that causes great sadness and despair in families whose loved ones are suffering from it. With the knowledge of the researchers and the courage of the volunteers, hopefully one day there will be a cure."

"Each stitch was made with love and prayers, and I hope that they will somehow be a comfort to the recipients," another quilter wrote.

Letters like these motivate Itrich to keep going. The Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study works with about 2,000 to 3,000 patients.

"We're going to keep sending out quilts," she said.

Ioana Patringenaru is associate director, electronic communications at UC San Diego.

UC Haiti Initiative rebuilds by letting Haitians lead

By Alison Hewitt

Ami Ben-Artzi, a professor and rheumatologist at UCLA's Geffen School of Medicine and the acting executive director of the UC Haiti Initiative, is still blown away by the devastating effects of last year's 7.0 earthquake in Haiti.

"For 200,000 people to be injured in one city in one minute is enormous. It's like a nuclear bomb," Ben-Artzi recalled almost a year after the quake.

And a year later, Haiti still needs help. That's where the UC Haiti Initiative (UCHI) comes in. The earthquake didn't just create short-term horrors; it also exacerbated Haiti's chronic problems, making it all the more daunting to help Haiti rebuild, Ben-Artzi said. UCHI has a long-term strategy to provide UC resources, like faculty expertise and student enthusiasm, to build a new generation of leaders in Haiti who can tame longstanding corruption.

The largely student-based initiative based out of UCLA's Program in Global Health, supports projects at multiple UC campuses. UCSF students, for example, are working with Haitian university students on a cholera-prevention project. UCSD students have Haitian partners for a project to increase Internet access for Haitian students. UCLA student Anna Alexandroni, the initiative's student chair who manages the 10 student campus chapters, is hard at work organizing an extravagant fundraising gala and a visit to UCLA by Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) for an advocacy event.

Cementing a partnership

The initiative's biggest event occurred the week of January 30 with a four-day statewide symposium with its future partner, the Universite d'Etat d'Haiti (UEH) or the State University of Haiti, that country's largest and most prestigious university. Largely destroyed by the quake, the university in Port-au-Prince sent a four-member delegation to the symposium to meet with UC faculty all over the state.

The meetings began at UC Berkeley on Monday, Jan. 31, before the UEH delegates moved on to visit other UC campuses up north. Then on Wednesday, Feb. 2, delegates met with UCLA and UC San Diego, said Tu Tran, a recent UC Berkeley graduate who founded the initiative while still a student.

"The idea is that, by talking and meeting with the faculty, the delegation will see specialties to pursue and resources to tap for UEH," Tran said.

The UEH dean of medicine visited the UCLA and UCSF medical schools, while the UEH engineering school dean visited the engineering schools at UCLA, UC Berkeley and UCSD. The UEH president, who is an agronomist, and its vice president, a political economist, met faculty in their fields at UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UCSD and UC Riverside.

The main focus was to ask Haitians what they need in order to rebuild rather than to push

plans hatched in California onto them, Ben-Artzi said.

That's also why UEH chose to work with UCLA, despite being courted by several other prominent aid groups and other U.S. universities. "Other groups came to them and said, 'Here's the plan, here's how we can help you.' It's insulting," said Ben-Artzi. "We recognize that the Haitians can rebuild their own country."

Plans for the future

After the UEH delegates met with faculty, the Haitian academics planned to identify UC specialties that UEH lacks, then request UC faculty's help as trainers, Ben-Artzi said. "One individual at UEH will then be the expert and train his or her colleagues," he said. "It's a train-the-trainer model."

Meanwhile, in addition to the cholera and technology projects, UEH students have floated the idea of tapping UC students for help in building a K - 12 school that the Haitian university students would manage. "There's very little public education in Haiti, so that would make a big difference," Ben-Artzi said.

One key step for the initiative was becoming based at UCLA's Program in Global Health, directed by Thomas Coates, a professor of infectious diseases. The program supports a variety of global health initiatives, from HIV prevention in countries like China, Peru and Uganda, to women's leadership programs in South Africa. Coates advised the initiative's student supporters on how to focus their priorities, raise money and obtain grants.

Faculty make key contributions to rebuilding Haiti

Other faculty at UCLA with longstanding ties to Haiti are also working with the UC Haiti Initiative. History Professor Lauren Robin Derby has visited the country several times for her research, and provided valuable contacts when initiative organizers went to Haiti last August to find local partners and build relationships. Derby's chance encounter with a Haitian artist in need of patrons led the professor to start a fundraising effort by selling traditional Haitian *vodoun drapo*, flags used interchangeably as art and in folk religious ceremonies. Derby is now developing an NGO, Les Twa Ti Siren, to sell the flags to raise money for the artists.

"Haiti has a lot of its own civic organizations on the ground, and I've tried to hunt those out," Derby said. "This symposium is the moment when we can actually hear how the Haitian university thinks we can serve its needs. ... We have to work with the Haitians on their objectives, or we're doomed to fail."

Efforts to rebuild and improve Haiti's banking sector are also underway, said Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda, a professor of Chicana/o studies and director of UCLA's North American Integration and Development Center (NAID). The center deals with economic relations between rich and poor countries, and it was brought in to provide Haiti's central bank with low-cost mobile banking programs and micro-financing for the poor, Hinojosa-Ojeda said. With NAID and UCLA students working to improve the Haitian banking system, they could soon create a way for donations to be made directly to Haiti via cell-phone texts, much the way the Red Cross raised funds immediately after the quake.

"Haiti is one of the most expensive countries in the world to send money to right now," Hinojosa-Ojeda said. "It's great that the university has come together on this. There's an incredible amount of resources at the University of California that, if harnessed, could make a huge difference. As soon as UC gets out of the financial crisis, we should look at this more

systematically – not just for Haiti, but for other global initiatives."

The initiative could be a model for how to respond to future disasters, Ben-Artzi said. As populations grow bigger and denser, especially in third-world countries with less sturdy infrastructure, mass fatalities become more likely.

"These mega-disasters are happening more often. If we can help Haiti today, we can learn how best to respond, and UC can be a leader when humanity faces its worst, most devastating events," he said. "Our response in Haiti is a model for our response to future Katrinas, Northridges and Indonesian tsunamis. Knowing how to respond is crucial to our own success and survival."

Alison Hewitt is a writer for UCLA Today.

First Annual Disability Service Awards to Honor Three Members of UCSF Community

By Juliana Bunim

The first annual 2010 Chancellor's Disability Service Award will honor three members of the UCSF community for their dedicated and remarkable work to advance access for and accommodation of those with disabilities.

"Developing an award brings attention to the work of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Diversity as well as what individuals on campus have done to continue improving access and accommodation to our disabled colleagues, students, staff and faculty on campus," said Michael Adams, director of the office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and Diversity and campus coordinator for Americans with Disabilities Act. "It brings that constituency into balance with other groups that are traditionally part of the broad definition of diversity."

The campus community is invited and encouraged to attend the first-ever award ceremony to recognize disability advocates in the faculty, staff and student/trainee categories. UCSF Chancellor Susan Desmond-Hellmann, MD, MPH, presented the awards on Feb. 22 in Toland Hall on the Parnassus campus. The awardees are:

Geraldine Collins-Bride, RN, MS, ANP, clinical professor and vice chair, Department of Community Health Systems;

Alice Wong, MS, staff research associate, Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences;
and

Nathaniel Gleason, MD, medical resident, the Department of Medicine.

Geraldine Collins-Bride

For nearly 30 years, Gerri Collins-Bride has been a primary care nurse practitioner in General Internal Medicine Practice at UCSF, providing care for adults and transitional age youth with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, receiving referrals from throughout Northern California.

She is a founding member of the Redwood Coast Regional Center Telemedicine Assessment and Consultation Team, a service that provides expert consultation to rural health care providers in Northern California to care for the most medically complex patients with developmental disabilities.

Collins-Bride also delivers primary care to individuals with serious mental illness in her nurse-managed faculty practice, PCOM (Primary Care Outreach for persons with Severe Mental Illness) in community-based residential mental health treatment programs in San Francisco. PCOM has been recognized as a successful model of academic community partnership, and served as a major clinical training site for advanced practice nursing students for four successfully funded federal training grants and a five-year NINR funded clinical trial of wellness for individuals with mental illness.

Collins-Bride acts as a role model as an advanced practice nurse. A member of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues, she is described as a faculty member who teaches caring and compassion and serves an excellent facilitator of complex clinical case discussions.

While working with a large number of patients with cerebral palsy, developmental delay, hearing and sight impairments, Collins-Bride provides much needed advocacy for patients and families and clinical expertise for both outpatient and inpatient team providers.

In addition to her hands-on patient care, Collins-Bride has for eight years co-chaired the Annual Conference on Developmental Disabilities, and is working closely with the Office of Developmental Primary Care in the Department of Family and Community Medicine as the director of Clinical Education and Training to provide lectures and clinical residency training for students in the schools of nursing, medicine and dentistry at UCSF.

She is an active member of the San Francisco Department of Public Health's task force on transition of care for people with disabilities, and works with San Mateo Health Plan Initiative to develop a more integrated model of care for people with developmental disabilities.

Alice Wong

As a prominent advocate for the disabled in the UCSF community since 1997, Wong has educated and inspired countless colleagues while working to make the urban campus more accessible and welcoming for all people with disabilities.

While enrolled as a student, Wong served as president of the Disabilities Interest Group for six years, working in monthly meetings to expand access and raise awareness across UCSF. It was that group's advocacy that led to the establishment of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Disabilities Issues, which Wong co-chaired for three years. Her work played a key role in the committee's efforts to create and implement design guidelines for all UCSF renovation and new construction projects, making more buildings and spaces accessible to the entire campus community.

Her contributions over the last decade are numerous, including the conception of the first online access resource outlining accessible features of all major campus buildings, and the development of the Disability Resources website, offering a single destination of resources for the campus community.

Wong also successfully advocated for more TTY phones on the Parnassus campus, the installation of wheelchair accessible buttons inside campus elevators and signs indicating that individuals with special needs should be granted the courtesy to enter elevators first.

She is known for her creative thinking and dedication to her work advocating for the disabled, and is recognized for her extraordinary knowledgeable by her peers.

Wong currently works with the federally funded Center for Personal Assistance Services in the UCSF School of Nursing, which provides personal assistant services to enable individuals with disabilities to live and work independently.

Last July, Wong received the Mayor's Disability Council Beacon Award for her outstanding leadership at the 20th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act celebration in July 2010. The award recognized her work at UCSF and as the president of the San Francisco In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority Governing Body. IHSS is a statewide publicly funded program providing personal assistance services to low-income people with chronic and disabling conditions.

Nathaniel Gleason

Gleason received his BA degree from Brown University, a medical degree from the UCSF School of Medicine and will complete his residency at UCSF in internal medicine in 2011. He has volunteered for public health programs throughout Latin America, had a career as a musician, and was a member of the AmeriCorps Health Corp program.

He accomplished all of this, despite being legally blind. Gleason's story was featured in the video profile series called "Voices" on the UCSF diversity website.

While in medical school at UCSF, Gleason was awarded a four-year School of Medicine Dean's Scholarship for both his academic achievements and his commitment to assisting the underserved. He served for four years as the only student representative on the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Disability.

Through a UCSF Social and Behavioral Student Research Grant, Gleason developed a disability curriculum including lectures and panel session specific to caring for patients with hearing, visual and mobility impairment to educate medical students in the care of patients with disabilities. The curriculum has a resounding effect, and remains an important part of the third-year medical student intersession course. Gleason has presented the content in several other venues including the Annual Review in Family Medicine Conference in San Francisco, the UCSF Family Residency conference series, and several nursing continuing medical education conferences.

In 2007, Gleason received the UCSF Essential Core Teaching award, and upon graduation from the School of Medicine received the prestigious Gold-Headed Cane Award, in recognition from his classmates that he is the most representative of a true physician.

Now as a resident in Internal Medicine, Gleason is known for his ability to connect with patients and families while demonstrating an infectious can-do attitude that motivates and inspires the entire community.

Juliana Bunim is content manager for the UCSF website.

A spirit of generosity: UCSC community breaks record for food bank giving

By Dan White

UC Santa Cruz's socially conscious Slugs collected a whopping 50,541 pounds of food this year for the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County holiday food drive, a 53 percent increase over last year's 33,000 pounds.

The haul was so big that the UCSC community has been awarded "Blue Diamond" status for its contributions – the first such time the campus has ever received this honor for a food drive. UCSC also helped Second Harvest exceed its overall goals; volunteers strived to raise 2.1 million pounds of food and cash equivalent since the holiday season and they ended up raising more than 2.2 million pounds.

In addition, UCSC was ranked high on a list of donors who gave canned food to the agency.

"Bravo," said UCSC's mail services manager Manuel Grijalva in a congratulatory message to volunteers, including students, staff, faculty and neighboring community residents who donated, advocated and collected for the food drive.

Grijalva gave a special acknowledgement to the School of Engineering, whose faculty, staff and students collected \$3,526 – the equivalent of 10,578 pounds of food – for the drive. "Slug engineers and scientists rock," Grijalva said.

Nearly 30 years old, Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County was the first food bank in the state, and is one of the nation's oldest. The food bank, by partnering with 200 agencies and programs, helps distribute 7.2 million pounds of food every year to working poor families, children, and seniors.

Looking at the dramatic difference between last year's final tally and this year's, Grijalva attributed the increase to "consorted efforts to mobilize our creativity and energy."

These innovations included an uptick in student involvement, the use of on-line donations, a new attention-grabbing food drive banner, and a fanciful silent auction organized by UCSC Community Engagement Coordinator Liz Evanovich for her colleagues in University Relations. Staff vied for items including a 28-year-old bottle of cabernet sauvignon, handmade stationery and jewelry, photography, and folk-art soft sculptures.

On December 3, a "Fill The Truck" event was held from 8 a.m. until noon, and drew an outpouring of response. Students dropped off bags of food they collected from neighborhoods near the foot of campus. Campus Mail Services trucks made the rounds at the 2,100-acre campus, but instead of delivering parcels, they collected big sacks of canned meat, canned fish, fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, and other items.

Plenty of students showed up with bags of food around 11:30 a.m. that day. One group dropped off a whopping 25 bags of food. Every dollar donated to Second Harvest Food Bank allows them to distribute \$8 worth of food to families in need.

Dan White is associate editor, marketing & communications at UC Santa Cruz.

HR BRIEFS

Use it or lose it – March 15 is deadline for using 2010 flexible spending account funds

If you had money left in your Health and/or Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) at the end of 2010, you have until March 15 to use the balance. If you don't spend the money, you lose it.

The period from Jan. 1 to March 15 following the plan year is called the grace period. During this time, you may use any remaining funds from your 2010 FSA accounts for eligible expenses incurred during the grace period.

Once you've incurred eligible expenses, don't forget to submit claims for reimbursement. You have until April 15, 2011, to submit claims for expenses incurred during the 2010 plan year through March 15.

Log in to your CONEXIS account online (mybenefits.conexis.com) to get immediate access to your FSA activity, account balance and reimbursement information.

For more details, see the Flexible Spending Accounts page on the At Your Service website (http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/health_welfare/depcare_hcra/index.html).

Coming Soon: Your Retirement Review

Watch for your latest Retirement Review arriving in the mail this month.

The Retirement Review is a personalized statement of your UC retirement benefits, combining your UC Retirement Plan and UC Retirement Savings accounts into one informative package.

Inside, you'll find information about your UC retirement benefits, including:

- An estimate of your retirement readiness at different assumed retirement ages, based on your balances and these projections;
- Your hypothetical future benefits in all retirement programs, based on assumptions about your retirement age;
- End-of-year account balances in any 403(b), 457(b), or DC plans in which you participate;
- Information on tools and resources that could help you in your retirement savings planning.

Take the time to review this information carefully; it may give you a good idea of how prepared you are for a secure financial future.